

recognition unit.

- 8) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the third program component causes the computer to display to the user on the screen the computed price for the shipment of the goods.
- 9) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the third program component causes generation of an e-mail containing information indicative of the computed price for the shipment of the goods.
- 10) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying an origin of the shipment.
- 11) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying a destination of the shipment.
- 12) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the first information includes a series of routes among which the user can select at least one route, the entry at the computer of information about the rail transportation service by the user including the user selecting a route in the series of routes.
- 13) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein said second program component causes the computer to deliver second information to the user to prompt the user to enter at the computer the one or more filtering criteria, said second program component using the one or more filtering criteria entered by the user to filter the basic pool of railcars.
- 14) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 13, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.

- 15) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 14, wherein the information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods includes information identifying the party that owns the one or more rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 16) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 13, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of goods to be shipped.
- 17) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 16, wherein the information about the type of goods is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of liquids, solids, logs, granular, grain type, commodity type, explosives, and hazardous materials.
- 18) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 13, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of rail car to use for the shipment of the goods.
- 19) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 18, wherein information about the type of rail is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of flat bed, tanker, central beam for logs, grain car, railcar for hazardous materials, gondola, refrigerated, hopper, box car, covered hopper.
- 20) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein said second program element is operative to extract from a user profile file one or more of the filtering criteria and use the extracted one or more filtering criteria to produce the filtered pool of rail cars.
- 21) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 20, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 22) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 21, wherein the information

about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods includes information identifying the party that owns the one or more rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.

23) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 20, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about the type of goods to be shipped.

24) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 23, wherein the information about the type of goods is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of liquids, solids, logs, granular, grain type, commodity type, explosives, and hazardous materials.

25) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 20, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about the type of rail car to use for the shipment of the goods.

26) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 18, wherein information about the type of rail is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of flat bed, tanker, central beam for logs, grain car, railcar for hazardous materials, gondola, refrigerated, hopper, box car, covered hopper.

27) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the CPU resides on a server machine and the computer is a client machine in a network arrangement with the server machine.

28) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 7, wherein the CPU resides in the computer.

29) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 27, wherein the first program component generates control messages to the client machine to cause the client machine to display the first information to the user.

- 30) A computer readable storage medium as defined in claim 29, wherein the control messages are HTTP messages and the client machine displays the first information to the user through a browser.
- 31) A method for computing the price for shipping goods, comprising:
- a) causing a computer to deliver first information to a user, the first information prompting the user to enter at the computer information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
  - b) receiving information about a basic pool of railcars and filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars;
  - c) causing the computer to deliver second information to the user, the second information prompting the user to select at the computer one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
  - d) computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
    - i) the rail transportation service;
    - ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.
- 32) A method as defined in claim 31, wherein the delivering of the first information to the user is done by displaying information on a screen.
- 33) A method as defined in claim 32, wherein the user provides the information about the rail transportation service through an input device selected in the group consisting of keyboard, pointing device, touch sensitive surface and speech recognition unit.
- 34) A method as defined in claim 33, including causing the computer to display to the user on the screen the price for the shipment of the goods.
- 35) A method as defined in claim 33, including causing generation of an e-mail containing information indicative of the computed price for the shipment of the goods.

- 36) A method as defined in claim 33, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying an origin of the shipment.
- 37) A method as defined in claim 33, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying a destination of the shipment.
- 38) A method as defined in claim 33, wherein the first information includes a series of routes among which the user can select at least one route, the entry at the computer of information about the rail transportation service by the user including the user selecting a route in the series of routes.
- 39) A method as defined in claim 33, including causing the computer to deliver second information to the user to prompt the user to enter at the computer the one or more filtering criteria for use by the filtering.
- 40) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 41) A method as defined in claim 40, wherein the information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods includes information identifying the party that owns the one or more rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 42) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of goods to be shipped.
- 43) A method as defined in claim 42, wherein the information about the type of goods is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of liquids, solids, logs, granular, grain type, commodity type, explosives, and hazardous materials.
- 44) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of rail car to use for the shipment of the goods.

- 45) A method as defined in claim 44, wherein information about the type of rail is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of flat bed, tanker, central beam for logs, grain car, railcar for hazardous materials, gondola, refrigerated, hopper, box car, covered hopper.
- 46) A method as defined in claim 33, including extracting from a user profile file one or more of the filtering criteria and use the extracted one or more filtering criteria for the filtering.
- 47) A method as defined in claim 46, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 48) A method as defined in claim 47, wherein the information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods includes information identifying the party that owns the one or more rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.
- 49) A method as defined in claim 46, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about the type of goods to be shipped.
- 50) A method as defined in claim 49, wherein the information about the type of goods is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of liquids, solids, logs, granular, grain type, commodity type, explosives, and hazardous materials.
- 51) A method as defined in claim 46, wherein the one or more filtering criteria extracted from the user profile file includes information about the type of rail car to use for the shipment of the goods.
- 52) A method as defined in claim 31, wherein information about the type of rail is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of flat bed, tanker, central beam for logs, grain car, railcar for hazardous materials, gondola, refrigerated, hopper, box car, covered hopper.

53) A method for requesting a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, comprising:

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- a) displaying information at a client system prompting a user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
  - b) displaying information at the client system prompting the user to enter at the client system one or more filtering criteria;
  - c) sending to a server system the information about the rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
  - d) sending to the server system the one or more filtering criteria;
  - e) receiving at the client system from the server system information about a filtered pool of rail cars produced by filtering a basic pool of rail cars on the basis of the one or more filtering criteria;
  - f) displaying at the client system information to the user prompting the user to select at the client system one or more rail cars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of the goods;
  - g) sending to the server system the information about the one or more rail cars selected by the user for the shipment of the goods;
  - h) receiving at the client system from the server system information about the price for the shipment of the goods;
  - i) displaying to the user at the client system the information about the price for the shipment of the goods.

54) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying an origin of the shipment.


55) A method as defined in claim 54, wherein the information about the rail transportation service includes information specifying a destination of the shipment.

56) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the information prompting a user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars includes a series of routes among which the user can select at least one route, the entry at the client system of information about the rail transportation service by

the user including the user selecting a route in the series of routes.

57) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.

58) A method as defined in claim 57, wherein the information about ownership of the rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods includes information identifying the party that owns the one or more rail cars to be used for the shipment of the goods.

 59) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of goods to be shipped.

60) A method as defined in claim 59, wherein the information about the type of goods is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of liquids, solids, logs, granular, grain type, commodity type, explosives, and hazardous materials.

61) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the one or more filtering criteria includes information about the type of rail car to use for the shipment of the goods.

62) A method as defined in claim 61, wherein information about the type of rail is selected from the set consisting of information indicative of flat bed, tanker, central beam for logs, grain car, railcar for hazardous materials, gondola, refrigerated, hopper, box car, covered hopper.

63) A method as defined in claim 53, wherein the client system and the server system communicate via the Internet.

64) A server system for computing a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, said server system containing a program element for execution by a CPU, said program element comprising:

- a) a first program component for causing a client system to deliver first information to a user, the first information prompting the user to enter at the client system information



about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;


- b) a second program component for receiving information about a basic pool of railcars, said second program component implementing a filter for filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars, said second program component causing the client system to deliver second information to the user, the second information prompting the user to select at the client system one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;
- c) a third program element for computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
- i) the rail transportation service;
  - ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.

65) A server system as defined in claim 64, wherein said third program component causes the client system to display to the user the price for the shipment of the goods.

66) A server system as defined in claim 64, wherein the user provides the information about the rail transportation service at the client system through an input device selected in the group consisting of keyboard, pointing device, touch sensitive surface and speech recognition unit.

67) A client-server system for computing a quote for a price for shipping goods by rail, comprising:

- a) a client system;
- b) a server system, said client system and said server system operative to exchange messages over a data network;
- c) a first program component for execution on said server system for sending messages to said client system causing said client system to deliver information prompting the user to enter at the client system information about a rail transportation service for shipment of goods by one or more railcars;
- d) a second program component for execution on said server system for receiving



information about a basic pool of railcars, said second program component implementing a filter for filtering the basic pool of railcars based on one or more filtering criteria to produce a filtered pool of railcars, said second program component sending messages to said client system causing said client system to deliver information to the user prompting the user to select at said client system one or more railcars among the filtered pool of railcars for the shipment of goods;

- e) said client system being operative to send to said server system messages to communicate to said server the information about the rail transportation service entered by the user and the one or more rail cars selected by the user;
- f) a third program element executed at said server system for computing a price for the shipment of the goods at least in part on the basis of:
  - i) the rail transportation service;
  - ii) one or more characteristics of the railcars in the filtered pool of railcars selected by the user.

68) A client-server system as defined in claim 67, said third program component sends messages to said client system for causing said client system to display to the user the price for the shipment of the goods computed by said second program element.

69) A client-server system as defined in claim 68, wherein the data network is the Internet.

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